

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT  
MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PROGRAM  
(ES)

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

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PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

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## INTRODUCTION

This Program Review Report (hereafter PRR) on the Master of Environmental Science program at Florida Atlantic is based on a Selfstudy Report (SSR) and program review site visit on February 9 and 10, 2015. Ms. Lynn Sargent provided a detailed itinerary and exemplary logistical support. We, the three member Program Review Team (hereafter PRT), were asked to review only the ES degree program. The Program Director Dr. Dale Gawlikis tenured in Biology.

The following subjects are addressed in the SSR

1. Mission and Purpose of the ES Program
2. Previous External Reviews
3. Instruction
  - a. Baccalaureate Programs: Undergraduate Certificate in Environmental Science
  - b. Graduate Programs: Master of Science in Environmental Science
4. Faculty
5. Research
6. Service/Community Engagement for Department/School
7. Other Program Goals for School or College
8. Strengths and Opportunities that Support Achievement of Program Goals
9. Weaknesses and Threats that Impede Progress for School or College
10. Resource Analysis for School or College
11. Future Directions for School or College
12. Student Feedback
13. Appendices:
  - a. Undergraduate Environmental Science Certificate Curriculum
  - b. Master of Science in Environmental Science Curriculum
  - c. Abbreviated Environmental Science Faculty CVs
  - d. Environmental Science Graduate Student Survey: 2013.

The Preview Review Team met the following individuals on February 9 and 10, 2015.

1. Russ Ivy, Interim Dean, College of Science and Associate Professor Programs and Assessment
2. Dale Gawlik, Professor and Director Environmental Science Program Department of Biological Sciences
3. Diane

The undergraduate program promotes a broad, integrated understanding of the interdependencies of humans and their environment and prepares students for diverse career paths related to environmental science. At the graduate level, the ES Program fosters leadership and provides students with depth knowledge and training in the natural and social sciences, preparing them to develop and implement solutions to complex environmental problems.

We read the SSR prior to arriving for on-campus interviews. The SSR provided information on a number of topics discussed above. While at the Boca Raton campus, we met with a diversity of people who are familiar with the program, including students, faculty, and administrators. Based on our conversations and our reading of the report, we provide responses to the questions posed to the reviewers at the end of the SSR and we provide our recommendations.

The PRT was asked to consider and provide the following:

1. Responses to the questions at the end of the study that the ES Program requested the PRT to address.
2. A set of recommendations and actions plans to be considered to take the program to the next level of standing. Some recommendations are embedded in answers to the questions as well as discussed in the recommendations section.

These issues are discussed below.

## Responses to Questions for Reviewers





attracts outside funding. Options to be explored could include offering short courses and workshops to industry, agencies, nonprofits and other interested individuals through CEST. These offerings will J K W F D S L W D O L J H R Q ) \$ 8 ¶ V Y L G H R F R G capabilities to expand reach over time. Revenue can

the ES Program.

- x The Boca campus houses the administration and a large number of faculty from Geosciences and Biology who participate in the ES Program. There are also faculty from other departments, labs, students and access to other administrative units. It also houses the preserve, which serves as a non-



### 3. Recommendation 3: Graduate Programs

- a. Increase baseline graduate stipends. This must be done to be competitive with other programs. The FAU ES stipends are so low that we understand that some of the students are on food stamps.
- b. Stipends must include health insurance benefits.
- c. Improve communications with ES students about Program expectations through effective use of email and the Program website. This could also be accomplished by distributing an up-to-date program manual/handbook. This handbook should be made available online to all students and faculty.
- d. Hold orientations at the beginning of the fall and spring semester every year and provide key critical information in a program manual/handbook.
- e. Include in the program information a rolling two-year class schedule that includes relevant classes from all departments offering courses in the ES Program.
- f. Revisit terms and conditions of teaching assistantships at HBOI for work load equity across the different campuses.

### 4. Recommendation 4: Undergraduate Programs

- a. As noted above, the Programs should evaluate offering a BS degree. Options such as cross-listing of courses should be explored as a way to ensure a robust set of class options. This would improve accountability and planning. Having a BS program would bring increased visibility to the environment initiatives at FAU. It would also align well with the statewide performance metrics by increasing the number of undergraduate degrees and providing a foundational STEM program. The BS degree F R X O G D O V R I H H G L Q W R W K H 0 D V W
- b. The Programs should also explore the possibility of an accelerated BS program. While SACS accreditation requirements require 150 credits for these programs, this option might still be attractive to the students.
- c. The program should explore stand-alone Certificate programs that are not linked to degree programs. This option may be both a revenue stream and a means of attracting students



## CONCLUSION

The ES Program is doing a very good job R Y H U D O O L Q H G X F D W L Q J P D V W H U ¶  
fostering faculty collaborations There are further excellent opportunities available to  
FAU for research and education in the environmental science arena. Creati Schol